

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2606

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to allowing volunteer fire personnel to hold elective or appointed office.

Brief Description: Allowing volunteer fire fighter personnel to hold elective or appointed office.

Sponsors: By Representatives Curtis, Takko, Orcutt, McDonald, Grant, Hinkle, Clements, Moeller, Chandler, Wallace, Tom, Kretz, Nixon, Blake, Kessler, Rodne, Haigh, B. Sullivan and Morrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/18/06, 1/30/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/06, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/2/06, 45-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a volunteer fire fighter working for a city, town, or fire protection district to serve as an elected public official or hold an appointed public office.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Clibborn, Vice Chair; Schindler, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; B. Sullivan, Takko and Woods.

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

Background:

Any city or town may adopt a resolution by a two-thirds vote of its full legislative body authorizing any of the members of that body to serve as volunteer fire fighters, volunteer ambulance personnel, or reserve law enforcement officers, and to receive the same compensation, insurance, and other benefits that other such volunteers receive.

Summary of Bill:

Authorizes a volunteer fire fighter working for a city, town, or fire protection district to serve as an elected public official or hold an appointed public office. This authorization does not apply to a fire chief.

"Volunteer" is defined to mean any member of a fire department who undertakes firefighting duties without receiving compensation or consideration for such duties. "Compensation" and "consideration" do not include any benefits the volunteer may accrue under current law regarding pension rights and other relief available to volunteer fire fighters.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

Allows a volunteer fire fighter to serve as an elected official, provided there is no legal prohibition preventing him or her from taking office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is an opinion issued by the Office of the Attorney General that has caused concern about the legality of a volunteer fire fighter serving in public office. Furthermore, a volunteer fire fighter in a Washington community was recently prevented from running for elective office. It is important to allow those who volunteer in our communities to also be allowed to participate in community affairs as elected officials. This bill would remedy the problem by authorizing volunteer firefighters to be candidates for elective office.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Curtis, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.